Policy Roadmap

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FICTIONS, LYING AND THE CONTEXT OF CANADIAN POLITICS TODAY

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Introduction

> ***For in every city these two different humours are to be found, which arise from this, that the people desire neither to be commanded nor oppressed by the great, and the great desire to command and to oppress the people.***
>
> Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince,* Ch. IX.

A generation ago, Hannah Arendt began her reflections on the Pentagon Papers, a forty-seven-volume history of American decision-making during the Vietnam War published by the *New York Times,* with an essay, "Lying in Politics." The subject concerned government deception and its consequence, the notorious credibility gap that continued to grow deeper until the war ended. Americans had simply stopped believing what their government said because they grasped the connection between deception and self-deception, namely that both took place in a "de-factualized" world, a world of fiction. Something similar has been taking place in Canada for the past decade, and as in the U.S., Machiavelli explains what it means.

Granted, truth-telling has never been counted among the political virtues, but it is also true that, generally speaking, reality exposes political liars to heightened threats of defeat. That is one lesson to be drawn from the totalitarian experiments earlier in the twentieth century that Arendt studied in detail. Unfortunately, totalitarians aim to do more than rewrite history. As Arendt said in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, Harcourt Brace and World, 1966), the aim of totalitarian "education" has never been to install convictions, even ones based on fiction, but to destroy the capacity of citizens to form any. The possibility of disregarding the difference between truth and falsehood has seldom been noticed. Yet, it is one of the most significant consequences of a decade of lying by the government of Canada and is reflected in the growing distrust by citizens of their government. In short, the Government of Canada has its hands in nearly everything to do with the daily lives of citizens but has no answers for the problems its interventions have created.

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Government Distrust and Legacy Media Distrust

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First, 51 percent of Canadian respondents to a recent Ekos Research Associated survey said "that they distrust the government to make decisions in the public's interest." In Alberta, the number was 64 percent. In Quebec, a mere 43 percent distrusted the government. ("Study Finds Trust in Federal Government has Collapsed," *Western Standard,* September 14, 2024).

Second, trust in the media was no better. A Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) report based on an Ipsos Ltd. survey found that only 32 percent of Canadians trusted that information provided by news media was accurate and impartial. In Alberta, 24 percent had confidence in reporters ("CRTC Report Shows Trust in Canadian News Media Hits New Low," *Western Standard* October 6, 2024). A month later, Aiden Muscovitch reported that 67 percent of Canadians were "unable to name a single Canadian journalist they find trustworthy" (Muscovitch, "The Week in Polling," *The Hub,* November 2, 2024). These levels of distrust were about the same as contemporary American ones. (Jeff Bezos wrote in his own paper, the *Washington Post,* that "Americans don't trust the news media." Quoted in *The Spectator,* November 1, 2024. According to the *Wall Street Journal,* October 15, 2024, American trust in legacy media stood at 31 percent.)

Third, the government of Canada was very much aware that neither it nor the legacy media were trusted. What it planned to do about it was politically more significant. Last July, Treasury Board President Anita Anand said that government spokespersons have to "correct" citizens' thinking through the federal Communications Community Office. Why? Because "the public's trust in government is eroded through misinformation [errors] and disinformation [lies]." Earlier in the year, the Department of Public Safety noted in a March 24, 2024, memo to the Treasury Board that there was "growing evidence" that Canadians were losing trust in government, an observation initially made in a separate report to the Clerk of the Privy Council. In that report, the COVID-19 event was singled out as a contributing factor, but provided no details (see Jen Hodgson, "Liberals Used Federal Spokesperson to 'Correct' Canadians' Thinking," *Western Standard,* July 7 2024).

Last fall, the government of Canada announced their plan to operationalize their "correction" of citizens' thinking. The International Development Research Centre, a crown corporation, planned to publicize its own work using "trusted

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media platforms," which were platforms "they already consult on a regular basis" (see "Feds Plan to Publish News on 'trusted media platforms,'" *Western Standard,* October 28, 2024). One can reliably conclude that, if this PR effort works in this policy area, it will be expanded to others.

To summarize the government's response: if distrust were the problem, the solution was better public relations, not a change in policy. Public relations, of course, is a form of top-down advertising, the purpose of which is to shape or create goodwill toward the government. The ideal consumer of the practice of image-making is, perhaps surprisingly, the Leader—in Canada that would be Justin Trudeau. He is likely more manipulated than ordinary citizens because he must rely on advisers who filter the information they think he would like to receive. The reason for Trudeau's relative independence from factual considerations is the well-studied problem of executive isolation from Parliamentary advice at which Canada excels.

Let us consider some evidence, starting with relatively minor governmental policies that seem to be based less on lies and fiction than ordinary bureaucratic stupidity and incompetence, which constitute the simple reasons to distrust the government.

In 2016 the taxpayers of Canada paid $8.3B for third-party consultants to the federal government. By 2022, the amount was $16.4B (Jesse Snyder, "Third-Party Consulting Fees," *National Post,* May 28, 2021). Treasury Board President, Jean-Yves Duclos, blamed the COVID-19 event. Then there was the ArriveCAN app. Launched in 2020, it was designed to ensure travellers arriving in Canada complied with COVID-19 regulations. A year later, it was redesigned when the regulations changed. A third version promised to reduce the number of interactions between travellers and customs officers to 40 seconds.

CBC reported that Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, said that the cost of the app could not be determined owing to poor bookkeeping. She estimated the final cost was around $60M. The initial estimate, according to the *National Post,* was a mere $80,000 (Darren Major, "The ArriveCAN app is About to Become Optional," CBC, September 24, 2022; Major, "Total Costs of ArriveCAN 'impossible to determine,'" CBC, February 1, 2024; Catherine Levesque, "Initial ArriveCAN costs were $80,000," *National Post,* October 1, 2022). In response to the bad publicity surrounding the ArriveCAN app, the government hired KPMG, a consulting firm, for advice on how to save money on hiring consulting firms (Bill Curry, "Ottawa paid nearly $670,000 for KPMG's Advice on Cutting Consultant Fees," *The Globe and Mail,* November 8, 2023).

The Government of Canada was not alone in fomenting distrust. Large numbers of citizens ignored Calgary's water "crisis" during June and July 2024 despite remarks by Sue Henry, Calgary Emergency Management Agency chief, who insisted "we are currently in a vulnerable state … we may be putting lives at risk" because "every drop counts" (*Western Standard,* June 28, 2024; see also George Koch, "Malign Neglect," C2C, June 23, 2024). Here, we would point out that the local legacy media were entirely onside. They quickly changed their emphasis in covering the "crisis" from the technical problems of a burst water main to the coercive water conservation policies pushed by the city administration. Mayor Gondek's words of encouragement were particularly irritating because she infantilized citizens and then said how proud she was that they did as they

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were told. In contrast, *Western Standard,* an alternate media outlet, provided critical scientific and engineering analysis of the bogus crisis (See Bill Marriott's columns, 8 and 17 June, and July 9, 2024).

Or there is the e-bus boondoggle. Fourteen electric buses, at a million bucks each, were ordered by Calgary in 2022 from Vicinity Motor Corporation of Aldergrove, B.C., as part of a pilot project. The "Chamber of Secrets," as Jeromy Farkas (who lost to Gondek in the 2021 mayoralty election) called city council, said that the pilot project was no longer needed because electric buses in Edmonton had been such a success.

Really? At the time, over half of the Edmonton fleet was out of service and no spare parts were available because the manufacturer of the Edmonton buses also went bankrupt. And, of course, as is true of electric cars, they don't work well in the cold, which sometimes occurs in Edmonton and Calgary, especially in winter. Who knew? (See more generally, Gwyn Morgan, "Robbing Western Canada's Farmers for Eastern Canada's Car Batteries," C2C, October 1, 2024).

These examples of relatively small-scale policy problems raise the question of whether governments were acting deliberately or simply making catastrophic mistakes (Terry Glavin, "The Liberal-induced Housing Crisis Cannot be allowed to Go on," *National Post,* January 19, 2024). That is an important question, especially if one is concerned to avoid the temptation to invent conspiracies. Some examples of major policy initiatives provide a more sinister take on this question.

The mainstream or legacy media are an issue in Canadian politics, and not just because so many Canadians think they are untrustworthy. Like it or not, trust them or not, the media are still in the middle of political life, insinuated between citizens and their government. Of course, the media facilitate communication, mainly by images and scenarios, but only the hopelessly naïve still consider them neutral. The rise of social media and alternative media facilitated by the Internet has complicated matters for government. That is a major reason why the questioning of managing all forms of media has recently attracted the attention of the Canadian government.

Not that the media were inert. Since 2010, because of new media, a third of traditional journalism jobs have disappeared (Richard Shimooka, "Canada's Enemies," *The Hub,* October 30, 2024). The Canadian government responded with what critics called a "media bailout plan," initially worth close to $600M. The purpose was to subsidize traditional media production provided they were considered a "qualified Canadian journalism organization" by the Canada Revenue Agency. The disbursement of funds was at the discretion of the Independent Advisory Board on Eligibility for Journalism Tax Measures. The initial result was the Canadian Journalism Labour Tax Credit, which provided refundable tax relief of up to $50,000 per eligible newsroom employee.

A second legal move, which added to the regulatory framework, was the *Online Streaming Act* (Bill C-11). It became law in April 2023. The main change was to give the CRTC broad regulatory authority over digital media companies, including Internet audio and video user-generated content. Previously, the CRTC regulated only broadcasting. The government said it wanted to ensure online media platforms played by the same rules as traditional broadcasters, particularly

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regarding investment in Canadian content. Then Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez also assured Canadians that the CRTC would not regulate user-generated content. However, as Peter Menzies observed, the authority to do so remained in the legislation. This, Menzies said, amounted to Gaslighting 101. Once passed, a blizzard of regulations and orders-in-council followed (see Menzies, "The Rewrite," *Substack,* June 17, 2024).

Next came the *Online News Act* (Bill C-18), passed in June 2023, which required Google and Meta to enter into compensatory agreements with Canadian news outlets for news distribution on their platforms. The law would also be enforced by the CRTC, which was, in addition, responsible for drawing up detailed regulations. The most important provision of the Act was to enable an eligible news outlet, as defined by the Canadian Qualified Journalism Organization regulations, to bargain with a digital news distributor such as Google. After initially threatening to vacate the Canadian news market, Google agreed to pay $100M into a fund to support the legacy media, which was already supported by the initial "bailout plan."

With the additional money from media platforms, the Canadian tax credit effectively subsidizes 50 percent of the salaries of legacy journalists. Rudyard Griffiths drew the obvious conclusion: "this is not going to be positive for the ongoing challenges that mainstream media is facing in terms of declining public trust in the very news and information that they produce" (Geoff Russ, "Half of Private Journalism Could Now be Government Supported," *The Hub,* November 30, 2023). An additional consequence: although the goal of the law was to support the digital news market, the chief beneficiaries were legacy media outlets because of the eligibility requirements (Sue Gardiner, "Bill C-18 is Bad for Journalism and Bad for Canada," Max Bell School of Public Policy, October 12, 2022; Peter Menzies, "Rewrite," *Substack,* June 17, 2024).

The pattern of government action, established with the initial media subsidies, seems clear enough. Selected media outlets, chiefly the legacy media, received taxpayers' money, undermining taxpayers' confidence in the subsidized media. Second, CRTC authority was enhanced to regulate online and often non-legacy content. Third, Big Tech was harnessed into paying their "fair share," drawing them into the regulatory and financial net. Whether the intentions of the Canadian government were all put into effect is a secondary question for our purposes. The question we would like to raise is: what is the significance of expanding the administrative state in order to control the media?

The answer is abundantly clear with the final piece of media legislation to consider, The *Online Harms Act* (Bill C-63), introduced in February 2024. The ostensible purpose is to protect children from harm, which purpose is already enshrined in the Criminal Code. The actual effect is to threaten freedom of expression, access to information, and security of adults under the guise of prohibiting (undefined) "hate speech." Without the usual bother of introducing evidence, you could pre-emptively be compelled by a court to wear an ankle bracelet, obey a curfew, stop drinking, avoid contact with certain people or places, and surrender your legally owned guns if somebody—a neighbour, perhaps—thinks you might someday say something hateful. You need not be charged, let alone convicted of a crime. But you can be fined up to $50,000 by the

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Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the "victim" of hate speech can be awarded up to $20,000 in damages. A new Digital Safety Commission would be empowered to investigate what appears on social media platforms, remove stuff they don't like, and impose fines. None of their regulations would require approval of Parliament but would be established by order-in-council, that is, by Cabinet fiat. It is obvious that the *Online Harms Act* repudiated centuries of our legal tradition that reserved punishment for perpetrators of illegal acts, not what citizens might do. As we shall see, this was not the only instance of the government introducing the category of a "possible crime." It is not perhaps surprising that Margaret Atwood called the *Online Harms Act* introducing Orwellian thoughtcrime.

As a postscript to the *Online Harms Act* and preceding media legislation, the effect of which has been to increase the dependence of the legacy media on the central government, thereby further destroying trust in a free and independent press, the Changing Narratives Fund, announced by the (by now ironically named) Heritage Department, subsidized "favoured topics created by preferred people." The new fund was hardly noticed by mainstream media outlets, which was "an indication of how routine and secretive politics funding of journalism has become." The point of the new fund, however, was obvious: to normalize and enhance "the government's grip on the newsrooms of the nation" (Peter Menzies, "The Trudeau Government's Latest Intrusion into Newsrooms," *The Hub,* October 31, 2024). But not only newsrooms because, despite Minister Rodriguez's statement, the videos of private citizens on online platforms such as YouTube (owned by Google), which, of course, can be critical of the government, can fall under the new regulatory regime if they become popular. That is, viral videos by private citizens can be transfigured into regulated content because they are popular. Does this not appear to be censorship of possible criticism?

As with other media regulations, the problem again is not what passing Bill C-63 into law says about the ambitions of the Trudeau government and its bureaucrats, but the significance of even entertaining such a bill. Two further examples provide additional clues.

Corresponding to the notion of "possible crimes" contemplated in the Online Harms Act is the equally fictitious category of "objective enemies." Once again, the media were in the middle of things. In our recent history, the foremost example was the Truckers' Convoy. In 2020, the prime minister hailed them as heroes for driving loads of lettuce from California to Montreal without the "protection" of vaxxes. In 2022, they were criminals for refusing government orders to be vaxxed. As in the twentieth-century definitions of objective enemies in Germany and the Soviet Union, their status was defined entirely by the changing policy of the government, not by the desire to overthrow it, which the truckers never entertained. Their marginalization also conformed to earlier precedents. They were insulted and abused by the government until everyone knew that they were enemies of the state, which then was followed by the proclamation of the *Emergencies Act* as proof of the Truckers' subversive intent.

It all made logical sense in the government's fictional world. The convoy might lead to a crisis, which might lead to the overthrow of Trudeau's government. Accordingly, the state had to act

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before anything treasonous might possibly take place. Thus, it was a possible crime nipped in the bud. The fact that the truckers had no criminal intentions and could not, in any event, overthrow the government was completely irrelevant. All that counted was the possibility, which happened to be completely fictitious. But that didn't matter either. Neither did the fact that possible crimes, like objective enemies, were completely beyond the capabilities of the police to deal with. Everything the police did in Ottawa depended on the state's ability to invent a fictitious emergency. There is also strong circumstantial evidence that the government used plants and provocateurs to discredit the protest and to introduce additional fictitious imagery by way of Nazi and Confederate flags (see Alexandra Lavoie, "The Flag Investigation," Rebel News, March 20, 2022; Shawn Buckley, "Testimony" to the National Citizens Inquiry, March 30, 2023, minutes 40 to 50). This reliance on fictions and the staging of fictitious events, which looks like more public relations, was also, as Hannah Arendt said, practiced by the worst of modern tyrannies.

A second element was also in evidence. One of the goals of every totalitarian regime is not simply to restrict freedom, which is common to all tyrannies, but to abolish human spontaneity in general (*Origins of Totalitarianism,* 405). In the context of the Truckers' Convoy, what mattered was not that they were protesting unjustified state action, which a prudent government might have anticipated, but that they were a spontaneous movement uncontrolled and unmonitored by the state and, notwithstanding the lies of police intel services, not controlled by anyone else either. That made the results literally incalculable, which is the greatest obstacle to state, which is to say bureaucratic, domination. These factors also help explain why the subsequent trials of trucker "leaders" Tamara Lich and Chris Barber were so far out of line with ordinary judicial procedures dealing with "mischief" (see Lynn Cohen, "Mischief Trial of the Century," C2C, October 31, 2024).

In June 2024, Prime Minister Trudeau was asked at the G-7 conference in Italy about a recently published National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP), called the Special Report on Foreign Interference in Canada's Democratic Processes and Institutions (chair the Hon. David McGuinty, Ottawa, 2024; pages given in parentheses in the text) and specifically whether any Liberal MPs were named in it. Now, Justin, like his father Pierre, has long been known to be what the Chinese call an "old friend" of China, so an honest response would not have come as a surprise to the assembled journalists. He replied instead that Canadians must "have confidence in our ability collectively as a democracy to defend the institutions, the processes around our elections and our democracy" (True North, June 17, 2024). His word salad contrasted with the responses of Jagmeet Singh, leader of the NDP, and Elizabeth May of the Green Party, who had also read the report and said that none of their MPs was named.

Despite its name, NSICOP is not a committee of Parliament but an advisory committee to the Prime Minister whose authority to require redactions and confidentiality regarding their reports is final. If any member revealed the redacted contents, they could face up to fourteen years in jail. That the names of MPs who allegedly provided information to foreigners were withheld—on "national security" grounds, of course—led to all MPs being suspect as well as to the suspicion

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that the Liberals were protecting members of their caucus who had, in fact, been compromised by China. The then Minister of Public Safety, Dominic LeBlanc, said that disclosing the names of allegedly traitorous MPs would be a "political stunt" that would also violate the *Security of Information Act* and so expose him, LeBlanc, to prosecution. That was not true. If LeBlanc spoke in Parliament, his words would be fully protected by parliamentary privilege. Indeed, only members of NSICOP have been stripped of that protection. As Ryan Alford observed, "it's possible that NSICOP was only given access to highly sensitive documents and permitted to write a report on them because its mandate cannot reveal precisely what the prime minister determinedshould not be released" (Alford, "What Does Trudeau Know about MPs Accused of Foreign Collusion?" Macdonald Laurier Institute, June 12, 2024; emphasis added).

A 2000 NSICOP report also raised concerns about interference by China in Canadian elections, as had previous intelligence collected by CSIS as discussed, for example, in Sam Cooper's (no relation) outstanding 2021 book *Willful Blindness.* Since then, the government has used various means to delay and obfuscate requests to provide evidence to the House of Commons, including the recruitment of a parti pris "special rapporteur," David Johnson, a former governor general, friend of the Trudeau family and China, and a man previously considered a beacon of integrity, to produce a generally misleading report. So, what, then, did the (redacted) NSICOP report say?

It began by noting that "it is not illegal to pay Canadian media to produce coverage that portrays a foreign state in a positive light" or to "amplify" the official policy of a foreign state. That is, foreigners producing propaganda in Canadian media is OK. But when that state conceals its involvement, "it is foreign interference" (20). For example, "China Watch" inserts look like ordinary newspaper copy but have been produced by the PRC Publicity Department. In September 2020, *The Globe and Mail* reprinted one such flattering insert called "A New Trudeau, A New Era" that, in tiny type, acknowledged it had been "produced by *China Daily* and distributed by *The Globe and Mail.*" Presumably, *The Globe* was handsomely compensated for sharing the wisdom of *China Daily.*

In the *Toronto Star* (September 24, 2020), Rosie De Manno criticized *The Globe* for running the *China Watch* piece. In the first place, she wrote, it was hypocritical: *The Globe* "was the first signatory in this country to the Trust Project," a global organization dedicated to "promoting truthful, accurate, fair and transparent journalism." This was important, she said, for the obvious reason that journalism everywhere was "under siege" owing to accusations of publishing fake news. And yet, "*China Daily* is fake news. *China Watch* is fake news. At the very least, *The Globe* should have made that clearer." Her rather harsh conclusion: "China is a bully and *The Globe,* alas, is a pimp."

In other findings, the Report admitted many examples of "witting and co-opted community organizations engaging in foreign interference" and named the usual suspects, the PRC, Russia, India, Pakistan, and Iran, as the chief actors (11, 20). Some "elected officials … began wittingly assisting foreign state actors soon after their election" (25). CSIS said that one MP "sought to arrange a meeting in a foreign state with a senior [foreign] intelligence official and also proactively

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provided the [foreign] intelligence officer with information provided [to the MP] in confidence" (26). There was also the "troubling intelligence" that some Parliamentarians were, in the words of the intelligence services, "semi-witting or witting participants in the efforts of foreign states to interfere in our politics" chiefly by way of community groups and businesses, by accepting money, by passing on privileged information, by influencing their colleagues or Parliamentary business, and by providing confidential information (20ff). In short, several MPs were engaged in "textbook treason," as Wesley Wark, a historian who specializes in the study of espionage, put it (quoted in Andrew Coyne, "What Else Do You Call It When People Conspire Against their Own Country?" *The Globe and Mail,* June 7, 2024).

The Report made three other pertinent observations. First, foreign and especially Chinese interference was particularly effective when directed at the nomination process in safe seats (30, 60, 64). Second, foreign engagement with parliamentarians was significant and important because such persons were knowledgeable and, evidently, vulnerable because they had not received advice on how to deal with being targets (66, 67). Third, the Report drew attention to the lack of action by Prime Minister Trudeau and the PMO (54, 60, 66), which has made Canada a "permissive environment" for foreign countries "to pursue their strategic interests" (60). NSICOP did not speculate about why the government had ignored previous NSICOP reports and other reports from the Canadian intelligence community. Nor did they draw attention to the fact that, as a member of the "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance, Canada's vulnerability had an international dimension to it (see Marc Edge, "If the NSICOP Report on Foreign Interference Won't Name Canadian Media Outlets, I will," *The Hub,* June 13, 2024; "Some Parliament Hill Suspects in Foreign Interference Named," *Western Standard,* October 28, 2024; Sam Cooper, "Exclusive: Beijing Endorsed Nomination of 41 Canadians in Canada's 2019 Election," The Bureau, November 12, 2024; Jen Hodgson, "CPP Says it Interfered with 41 Candidates," *Western Standard,* November 12, 2024).

At his June 2024 press conference in Italy, Trudeau indicated the next move the government had in mind by eclipsing any concern with the PRC by announcing an even greater concern with India. On Thanksgiving Monday, October 14, 2024, Trudeau expelled six Indian diplomats for conducting or organizing the commission of violent crimes in Canada. The RCMP supported the prime minister's allegation by mentioning incriminating details, which they normally do not disclose ("Trudeau Accuses India of Supporting Violent Crimes in Canada," CBC, October 14, 2024). A couple of weeks later, Nathalie Drouin, an aide to the prime minister, said that, after Indian officials agreed to keep talking to Canadian officials in confidence, she leaked the Canadian position to the *Washington Post* (Ryan Tumility, "Trudeau Aide Says She Leaked India Allegations to *Washington Post.*" *National Post,* October 30, 2024).

Two additional questions emerged from Canada's "blame India" strategy. The first was: how did a relatively obscure separatist group, the Khalistanis of Punjab, India, have become a Canadian problem? In a recent interview with Donna Kennedy-Glans, the now-retired politician Ujjal Dosanjh provided two reasons. First, Trudeau does not understand that "the vast majority of

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Sikhs are quite secular" even if they attend religious services. Second, Trudeau mistakenly thinks the Khalistanis, Sikhs seeking to carve out an independent "land of the pure" from the Punjab, are a majority when, in fact, they are not. Most Sikhs do not criticize the Khalistanis out of fear and intimidation (Kennedy-Glans, "Ujjal Dosanjh on Why PM is to Blame for Sikh Extremism in Canada," *National Post,* November 2, 2024).

It is certainly possible that Trudeau is uninformed about the diaspora politics of Canadian Sikhs, but that does not entirely explain why he treated Chinese interference and Indian interference so differently—suppressing classified information concerning China and leaking classified information to a foreign newspaper concerning India. Two additional possibilities suggest themselves. First, Jagmeet Singh, who has propped up the Trudeau government for many months, has been associated with the Khalistani National Sikh Youth Federation and has given equivocal answers when asked about Talwinder Singh Parmar, regularly identified as the chief architect of the mid-air destruction of Air India Flight 182 in 1985 ("Jagmeet Singh's Statement in Sikh Separatism," *Maclean's,* March 14, 2018; Terry Glavin, "Indian Spies Did It and other Ottawa Conspiracy Theories," *Maclean's,* March 5, 2018; CBC, "The Current," March 16, 2018; Robert Fife and Steve Chase, "Jagmeet Singh Attended 2006 Seminar with Sikh Youth Leader who Advocated Political Violence," *The Globe and Mail,* March 14, 2018). Second, given Trudeau's evident admiration for the PRC, the corollary, lack of admiration for the greatest Asian geostrategic rival to China, follows as night follows day. This consideration may help explain his otherwise bizarre Mr. Dressup tour of India in February of 2018 in a new and provocative light. That is, it may have been a deliberate or "witting" affront to India.

We have noted such otherwise shocking events as Canada's "national newspaper" being accused of pimping for the PRC. The existence of the Changing Narratives Fund also looks very odd in a functioning democracy. Perhaps we can draw a few conclusions.

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Conclusion

Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* was a controversial book when it appeared in 1951. So was Machiavelli's *Prince* when it appeared in 1532. Together, they can warn Canadians about what the Government of Canada aspires to be and what kind of regime it is. Probably the simplest description is that it is an ideological regime, a government that is grounded on fiction and imaginary realities. Here, we may accept Arendt's understanding of ideology as the "logic of an idea," though in the present instance, Machiavelli has already described the only relevant "idea" involved. The great, whom we have been identifying with the government and the legacy media, always want to oppress the people. What Machiavelli could not imagine is that the great think they can do so within a fictional or "de-factualized" world.

"Arendt indicated that the difference between lies and truth in the modern world depended on power, including the power of repetition and display.

Arendt indicated that the difference between lies and truth in the modern world depended on power, including the power of repetition and display. The great in government and the media today do not trust their eyes and ears and their common sense but rely instead on their imagination. These organizations are designed to translate propaganda woven around a central fiction—the COVID-19 event, anthropogenic global climate change, the Truckers' convoy—into an effectual truth, as Machiavelli would also say (*Prince,* Ch. 15) so that members of society respond in the same way. At the same time, the great in government and the media have displayed an astonishing combination of gullibility and cynicism as if anything was possible because nothing was true.

Justin Trudeau has shown not that he is infallible but that anyone who commands the instruments of state violence, such as the *Emergencies Act* provides, can act for a time as if he were infallible. Because his world is seen as fictitious anyway, failures need not be admitted, recorded, or remembered. Because Trudeau has simply declared a fictional Canada to be a "post-national state," it can annex itself to any other state without losing anything of its collective non-identity. Canada thus has no national interests and no reason to pursue its self-interest, such as the well-being of Canadians by having a functioning economy or means of defending itself.

This is sometimes called "idealism," which in reality means having an unwavering faith in a fictitious world. In foreign affairs, this "idealism" is captured by globalism; since, for historical reasons, Canadians, especially Laurentians, might be reluctant to hitch their post-national state to the US, why not go for something remote and exotic such as China? If the Chinese are not, perhaps, remote enough and have their own agenda, we can simply imagine that they

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don't. As far as domestic affairs are concerned, "idealism" has taken the form of environmentalism. This, too, is fictitious when Canada produces 1.5 percent of global CO_2 emissions, and India and China account for 68 percent, and everyone knows it. Everyone also knows that China and India are not going to forego their future economic prosperity to please an "idealistic" or irrational mob of Western greenie fanatics. Yet, in a fictitious ideological world, none of that matters either. If you accept the fiction that anthropogenic climate change has created a "climate crisis," it follows logically that Alberta (and, to a lesser extent, Saskatchewan) must be destroyed. That is the least that "Canada" can do. The fact that the Liberals have few supporters in the prairie west makes it easier in practice. It does in no way touch the logic. But by surrendering to it, one surrenders one's commonsense and flirts with tyranny.

But is the premise regarding anthropogenetic global climate change true? It doesn't need to be true because it is self-evident, and so it never needs defence or reference to facts and arguments. That is why, for example, should the government of Alberta organize a climate conference with respected climatologists who introduced genuine scientific facts and arguments to contradict the ideologically created fictions and fears of Ottawa, it would be a waste of time and money. The result would be to redouble hatred of Alberta because, gasp!—it challenged the fiction which everyone must believe.

The goal of perpetual "natural governing parties" is to seize the government administration, of course, but also to fill all the significant offices in government, the permanent public services or the "deep state," with party members. This amounts to an amalgamation of party and state, which leads to a reversal of roles, and the party becomes the propaganda organization of the state. Thus, the deep state, not the party, runs the government. The need for "objective enemies" capable of "possible crimes" can be left up to the bought-and-paid-for legacy media as their coverage of the Truckers' convoy or the "influence" of the PRC on the Liberals so amply has demonstrated. These considerations also help constitute the context for the otherwise inexplicable refusal of Justin Trudeau to resign even when it imperils the Liberal Party of Canada for decades to come.

As for the future, we may take some solace or find reasons for hope. After all, the Americans tried to find out what went wrong in Vietnam, not least of all because, during the 1960s, the *New York Times* saw its job as one of breaking the story. There is no such luck today in Canada with the CBC or other mainstream networks, the *National Post,* or *The Globe and Mail.* Instead, we have alternate media to rely on. Who could have seen that innovation coming? Which is just the point. No government, no matter how domineering their aspirations, can deal with the unpredictability that derives from human creativity, from the simple fact that humans can initiate something that no one, and certainly not the police, the bureaucrats, or the ideologists, can foresee. That may be cold comfort, but political surprises are unfailing and more likely in an environment of distrust born of repressing facts and promoting fictions.

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